

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BANGUI 00277 121057Z

ACTION AF-08

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FM AMEMBASSY BANGUI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8262

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FOR AF/C ONLY

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EINV, EMIN, CT

SUBJECT: DIAMOND INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENTS

1. OUTSIDE INTEREST IN THE CAE'S DIAMOND RESOURCES SEEMS TO BE
ON THE UPSWING. IMPERIAL ADVISOR JOEL BARKAN, HAS INFORMED US
OF CURRENT SAG EFFORT TO IDENTIFY NEW DIAMOND DEPOSITS IN THE CAE
ACCORDING TO BARKAN A SOUTH AFRICAN GEOLOGIST HAS BEEN ASSIGNED
TO THE CAE AND IS CURRENTLY MAKING FIELD STUDIES IN THE BERBERATI-
CARNOT AREA. IN ADDITION TO SOUTH AFRICAN INTEREST A GROUP OF SYRIAN
BUSINESSMEN LED BY ONE ALADIN BAHRI AND ACCOMPANIED BY EX-SENATOR
MONTOYA RECENTLY (FEBRUARY 5-8) VISITED BANGUI. THEIR PRIMARY
INTEREST WAS ALSO IN THE DIAMOND BUSINESS. BOTH THE SOUTH AFRICAN
AND AN AMERICAN GEOLOGIST TRAVELLING WITH BAHRI'S GROUP APPARENTLY
BELIEVE THAT THERE ARE UNTAPPED DIAMOND DEPOSITS WHICH THE ESTABLISHED

COMPANIES HAVE NOT EXPLOITED. THESE ARE INITIAL CONCLUSIONS AND
WE DO NOT KNOW HOW WELL-FOUNDED THEY ARE. (FURTHER DETAILS HAVE
BEEN POUCHEO TO AF/C).

2. COMMENT: THE IMPLICATIONS OF THESE DEVELOPMENTS FOR THE FUTURE
OF SCED & DDI'S INVESTIMETNTS IN THE CAE ARE UNCLEAR. BOTH BARKAN
AND ALI HEJAZI, ANOTHER IMPERIAL ADVISOR WHO FACILITATED THE MONTOYA
VISIT, HAVE TIES WITH DDI'S PRINCIPAL COMPETITORS IN BANGUI. IN ORDER
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TO PROMOTE THEIR OWN INTERESTS, THEY MAY BE SEEKING TO INHIBIT RETURN
OF SCED BY REVIVING ALLEGATIONS THAT SCED DID NOT MAKE SUFFICIENT
EFFORT TO INCREASE PRODUCTION. DEPARTMENT MAY WISH TO SHARE STME
OF THE INFORMATION IN PARA 1 WITH JOLIS. WE UNDERSTAND JOLIS IS
CONSIDERING ANOTHER VISIT TO BANGUI IN THE NEAR FUTURE TO SEE EXACTLY
WHERE THINGS STAND. VISIT SEEMS APPROPRIATE AT THIS TIME AND WE WILL
BE IN TOUCH WITH JOLIS WHILE HE IS HERE.

QUAINTON

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